

## **International Market Insight:**

### *Waste Electrical and Electronic Equipment (WEEE)*

#### **Summary:**

The European Union (EU) consists of fifteen Member States and represents an internal market in excess of 270 million consumers. The Directive on Waste Electrical and Electronic Equipment (WEEE), when implemented, will require the take back and recycling of both, current and historic waste electrical and electronic equipment throughout the European Union. (Historic waste is the waste that has already been deposited into the waste stream, such as a radio thrown into the landfill in 1989.) Given the size of the European market and the scope of the Directive, the WEEE will create potentially significant market opportunities to companies engaged in recycling, waste recovery and waste management. The degree to which market opportunities exist will depend on the Member State in question. For that reason, the reader is encouraged to see the International Market Insight reports submitted from EU Member State posts.

- *Directive on Waste Electrical and Electronic Equipment (WEEE)* seeks to recover, collect, and recycle both, historic and current waste electrical and electronic equipment. Collection and recycling of both, current and historic waste is envisioned in the proposed Directive, though the question of how take-back will be financed and who will pay the costs remains unresolved in the legislation (i.e., manufacturers individually financing their own take-back, or financing through sector-specific collective organizations). Recycling targets are ambitious; and Member States have a degree of latitude in the implementation of the WEEE Directive, which may translate into differing take back and recycling schemes across the European Union.

#### **Effected Industries:**

- Large Household Appliances (e.g., refrigerators, dish washers, clothes washers, dryers)
- Small Household Appliances (e.g., vacuum cleaners, toasters, coffee machines)
- Information Technology and Telecommunications Equipment (e.g., personal computers, routers, hubs)
- Consumer Equipment (e.g., televisions, DVD players, radios)
- Lighting Equipment (e.g., fluorescent lamps, high density discharge lamps, low pressure sodium lamps)
- Electrical and Electronic Tools (e.g., drills, saws, sewing machines)
- Toys (e.g., hand-held game video consoles, video games, electric trains and cars)
- Medical Equipment Systems (e.g., radiotherapy equipment, , cardiology equipment, dialysis equipment)
- Monitoring and Control Instruments (e.g., smoke detectors, heating regulators, thermostats)
- Automatic Dispensers (e.g., dispensers for hot drinks, dispensers for hot or cold bottles or cans, dispensers for solid products)

## **Countries to Implement the WEEE (Member States of the European Union):**

- Austria
- Belgium
- Denmark
- Finland
- France
- Germany
- Greece
- Ireland
- Italy
- Luxembourg
- The Netherlands
- Portugal
- Spain
- Sweden
- The United Kingdom

Information and market research reports for each country listed, above, can be accessed on the Showcase Europe web site, [www.sce.doc.gov](http://www.sce.doc.gov).

## **What does this Mean?**

Apart from the potential market access issues that surround the WEEE, this proposed Directive presents potential market opportunities for United States firms, especially those engaged in:

- ✓ Waste and Waste Management
- ✓ Recycling and Waste Recovery Technologies
- ✓ Transportation, Distribution and Storage
- ✓ New Product Development / Technological Innovation
- ✓ Professional Services (e.g., Consultants, Accountants, Lawyers)

## **Time Line to Implementation:**

The WEEE is currently under consideration in the European Parliament. A vote is expected in April 2001. A vote is expected in the Council sometime in June. We foresee guidance on the transformation of the WEEE Directive into Member State law being issued by the Commission late in 2002. We expect actual implementation by Member States to be completed by mid-year 2004. This time line assumes two events:

1. That the Directive is considered by each co-legislator (i.e., the European Parliament and Council) in both, a “First” and a “Second Reading”; and,
2. That a Conciliation Committee needs to be called to reconcile any divergent drafts that may be generated during the legislative process.

## **For more information:**

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